

A2 useable parts from plant stalks, the picking device having an effective length, wherein rotating feeding element is designed to transport the plant throughout the effective length of the picking device.

2. A feeding and picking device for feeding and picking a standing agricultural crop wherein individual plants in the crop are provided with plant stalks, the device comprising a rotating feeding element that is rotated about a vertical axis and comprises a body with outwardly extending fingers, the rotating feeding element grasps plant stalks and directs the plant stalks to a picking device which separates useable parts from plant stalks, wherein the feeding device is designed to support the plant stalk while it is being processed by the picking device.

A3 4. A feeding and picking device as defined by claim 3 wherein gaps are formed between the outwardly extending fingers, plant stalks are captured in the gaps, the gaps are sufficiently deep to ensure that they pass over the snapping channel of the feeding element.

5. A feeding and picking device as defined by claim 4 wherein the device is provided with two rotating feeding elements, an upper feeding element and a lower feeding element, the upper feeding element has a direction of rotation, the upper feeding element is provided with outwardly extending fingers that are curved away from the direction of rotation.

6. A feeding and picking device as defined by claim 5 wherein the lower feeding element is located beneath the upper feeding element.

A4 8. A feeding and picking device as defined by claim 7 wherein the lower feeding element is provided with outwardly extending fingers that are curved towards the direction of rotation.

A5 20. A crop harvesting machine having at least two feeding and picking devices, wherein each feeding and picking device feeds and picks a standing agricultural crop wherein individual plants in the crop are provided with plant stalks, the device comprising a rotating feeding element that is rotated about a vertical axis and comprises a body with outwardly extending fingers, the rotating feeding element grasps plant stalks and directs the plant stalks to the picking device which separates useable parts from plant stalks, the picking device having an effective length, wherein the rotating feeding element is designed to transport the plant throughout the effective length of the picking device.

Remarks/Arguments

The examiner in an Office Action dated 6 February 2002 rejected all of the pending claims 1-21. As such, this Office Action and the references cited therein have been carefully considered and this amendment is now presented in an effort to